



County of Roanoke **PLANNING COMMISSION**

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Mr. Jason Peters, Vice-Chairman
Ms. Martha Hooker
Mr. Gary Jarrell
Mr. Gene Marrano

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Vinton District
Catawba District
Hollins District
Cave Spring District

AGENDA **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2012** **6:00 P.M. (4th FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM 438)**

WORK SESSION

- A. Call to Order
- B. Approval of Agenda
- C. Discussion of Partnership for a Livable Roanoke Valley Presentation –
Jake Gilmer and Megan Cronise
- D. Comments of Planning Commissioners and Planning Staff
- E. Adjournment



Promoting Economic Opportunity and Quality of Life in the Roanoke Valley Partnership for a Livable Roanoke Valley

Progress Report Volume 1
October 2012

About the Project

To continue to make the Roanoke Valley one of America's best places to live and work, stimulate local economies and realize the region's fullest economic and cultural potential, more than 60 organizations, including local governments, non profits, businesses and educational institutions have formed the Partnership for a Livable Roanoke Valley. The Partners are embarking on a process to develop the valley's first

coordinated regional plan. This effort will be guided and shaped by citizens - those who know the Roanoke Valley best.

The Roanoke Valley has unique assets that have served its citizens well. The region's pleasant four-season climate, a low cost of living, and array of outdoor amenities, such as the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Appalachian Trail, the Jefferson and Washington National Forests, and Smith Mountain Lake frame and define the valley. However, while these distinct

**The goal of
this effort is to
promote economic
opportunity and a
greater quality of
life for all Roanoke
Valley residents.**

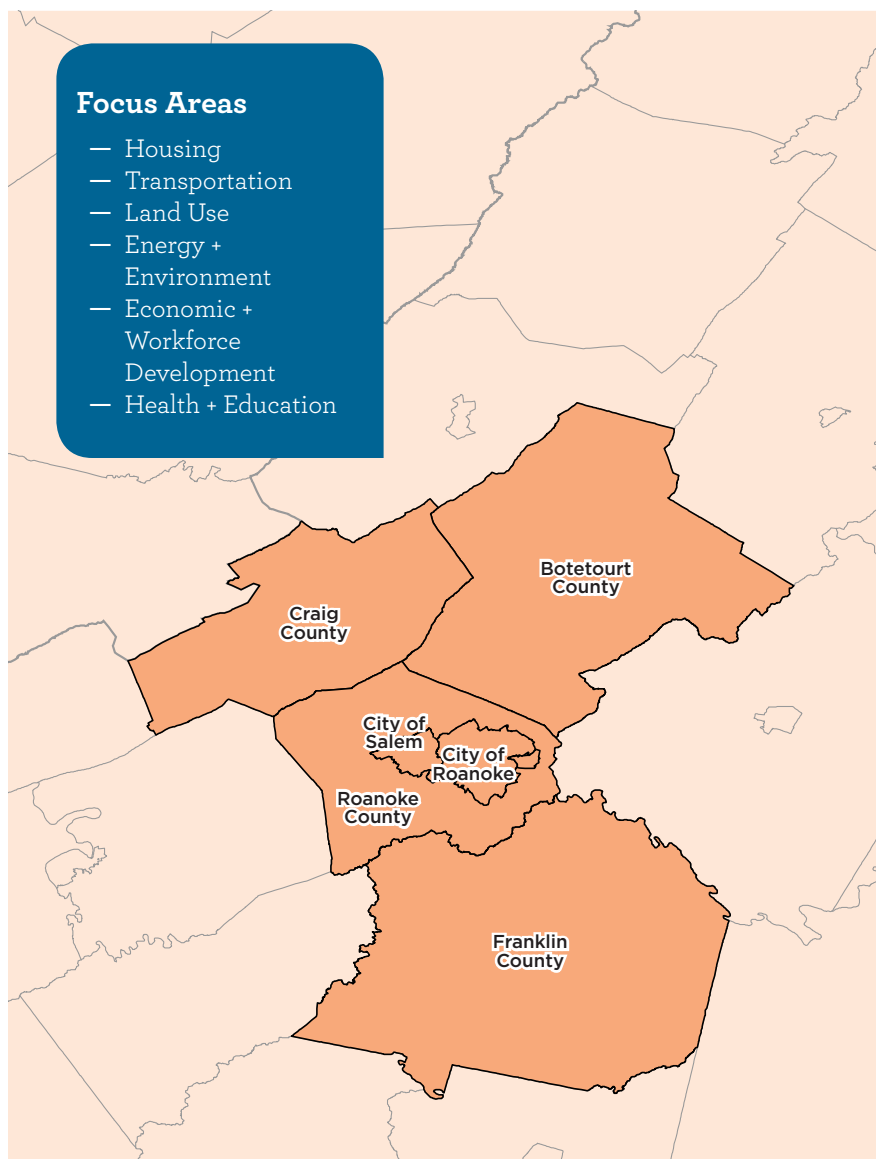
physical geographic assets offer many opportunities, they also contribute to challenges we face in our future, in areas like transportation, economic development, housing, and environmental quality.

To address these challenges and ensure that the valley achieves its fullest potential, the Partners are following a straight-forward approach for solving problems. The Partnership will first identify these issues through a series of surveys and outreach efforts, and will then work with community members to create scenarios that speak to how the Roanoke Valley could grow and prosper. Once we have outlined future scenarios and have a solid grasp of how the Roanoke region wishes to grow in the coming years, we'll seek to build public support for that vision. Implementing the plan's components through strategic initiatives will lead to gains in quality of life, jobs, and access to opportunity.

The entire Roanoke Valley stands to benefit from this process through coordinated approaches to economic development, transportation, job creation, energy, health and education, housing, land use, and environmental preservation. Central to the effort is a clear process of engagement for local governments, businesses, and non profits to unify their separate efforts to address issues of mutual concern.

Recent Planning Activities

The Partnership initiated Phase I in the fall of 2011 and through intensive two-day workshops, on-line surveys, and research completed the following four tasks. Over forty stakeholders,



Jurisdictions included in the Livable Roanoke Valley Partnership

including traditionally under-represented population, participated in Focus Area workshops.

1 Trends Analysis

For each Focus Area, participants were asked to identify key trends – such as decreased state and federal funding - affecting the future of the region, contemplate the certainty of the trend occurring, and assess

the importance of the trend to our planning effort. Trends considered to have a high certainty of occurring and a high importance to the effort were combined in the high-high quadrant of the Trend Certainty and Importance Matrix to create a comprehensive listing of trends influencing our livability planning effort. Results of this activity are summarized in a memo available online at www.livableroanoke.org. A follow-up meeting was held in November 2011 with all stakeholders to present findings and invite comment.

The list of influential trends were further refined during a scenario planning workshop in June 2012. Through a voting process, the group narrowed the list to the region's top 13 "driving trends" which will be used to inform the development of future Roanoke Valley scenarios in later phases of this undertaking.

2

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats (SWOT) Analysis

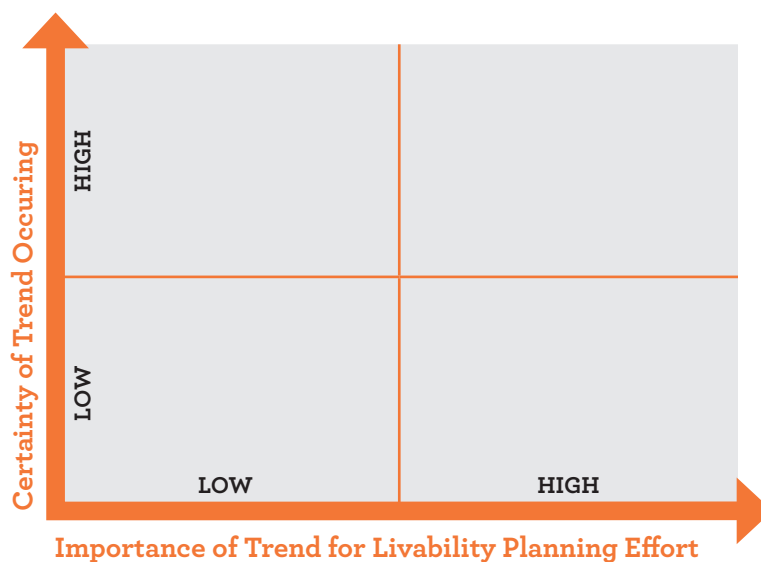
The purpose of the SWOT analysis was to engage a wide variety of stakeholders in a process designed to identify the region's strengths and weakness as well as opportunities and threats as we plan for a more livable future. A dedicated session on SWOT was conducted as part of the six Focus Area workshops on trends.

Each Focus Area subcommittee conducted its own unique SWOT analysis. Ultimately, the highest ranking findings of each group were consolidated into one list.

3

Livability Gap Analysis

A Gap Analysis was conducted to determine the extent that organizations in the region have already incorporated considerations of livability into their plans, policies, programs, and measures. A survey was distributed via email in November 2011 to over one hundred public, private, and non-profit entities throughout the Roanoke Valley with questions about the six Focus Areas.



Top Driving Trends in the Region

- State & Federal Funding
- Health Care Costs
- Housing Costs
- Workforce Qualifications
- Cultural Attitudes/Habits
- Regional Infrastructure
- Demographic Challenges
- Environmental Quality
- Government Effectiveness
- Employment Opportunities
- Regional Economic Competitiveness
- Access to Natural Resources/Scenic Beauty
- Changes in Technology

Strengths

- Good community collaboration (nonprofit)
- Greenways, outdoors, AT, Blue Ridge Parkway
- Good freight rail services
- Overall energy awareness
- Research Technology Centers
- Higher education opportunities

Weaknesses

- Lack of regional cooperation (government)
- Dependence on fossil fuels
- Lack of shared vision
- Resistance to change in general
- Lack of strong regional identity
- Dependence on emergency health care

Opportunities

- Leverage community housing improvement efforts
- Regional Cooperation
- Completion of greenways
- Growing arts and cultural community
- Build on local colleges & research

Threats

- Political & organizational conflict
- Increased demand for healthcare
- Young professional out migration
- Inappropriate development
- Resistance to change
- High poverty in City of Roanoke

A total of 64 survey responses were received. Of the respondents, approximately 40 percent were from the public sector, 18 percent from the private sector, and 42 percent represented a non-profit entity. Based on the survey results shown in the tables to the right, economic and workforce development was addressed by a greater percentage of respondents than the other 6 focus areas. For example, 68 percent of organizations have plans, policies, programs, or measures that address economic and workforce development, while 32 percent do not. More specifically, 89 percent have plans, 35 percent have policies, 73 percent have programs, and 46 percent have measures that reference this particular focus area.

The survey data can also be examined in more detail by organization type. Of the respondents that have plans, policies, programs, and/or measures that address health, 60 percent, 12 percent, and 28 percent were from the public, private, and non-profit sectors respectively. The table above provides additional information by organization type and focus area.

The results of the gaps analysis will be used to inform the development of integrated strategies and how they can address deficiencies in the region or capitalize on existing organizational resources.

4

Plan Review

Following the Gap Analysis, stakeholders and committee members targeted 40 plans and

Plans, Policies, Programs and Measures by Focus Area

Focus Area	Yes	No	% With Plans	% With Policies	% With Programs	% With Measures
Economic and workforce development	68	32	89	35	73	46
Energy and the environment	63	37	77	46	77	50
Housing	38	62	55	46	73	46
Land use	39	61	77	62	39	31
Transportation	37	63	73	55	55	27
Education	51	49	62	19	62	19
Health	49	51	53	35	82	35

Plans, Policies, Programs and Measures by Organization

Focus Area	ORGANIZATION TYPE		
	Public	Private	Non-Profit
Economic and workforce development	44	10	46
Energy and the environment	53	10	37
Housing	48	8	44
Land use	75	13	12
Transportation	57	14	29
Education	41	10	48
Health	60	12	28

reports for further review to better understand how the Plans address issues key to livability, such as transportation choice, affordable housing, and healthy communities. The review also determined to what extent the plans are aligned with each other, whether they are actively being implemented, and if there are gaps that need to be addressed.

The plans reviewed ranged from Comprehensive to Strategic in nature; all were deemed to be relevant to the work of the Partnership. A checklist and rating criteria were used in reviewing to assess specific plan structure, (such as goals, strategies, implementation, and indicators) and the extent to which the Focus Areas for this undertaking were addressed.

The plans were also reviewed for consistency with initial draft livability principles adapted from the Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities, as listed below. However, principles appropriate for the Roanoke Valley will be developed during Phase II of the planning process.

1. Provide more transportation choices
2. Promote equitable, affordable housing
3. Enhance economic competitiveness
4. Support existing communities
5. Coordinate and leverage Federal policies and investment
6. Value communities and neighborhoods
7. Create and strengthen health and education systems

The draft results of the Plan Review can be found at www.livableroanoke.org. The following is a sample of key findings documented based on a review of the Roanoke Valley local government comprehensive plans. Additional reviews will be compiled in the final technical report and used during the Phase III strategy development process.

- Most plans acknowledge the need for more transportation options; however few provide specific implementation strategies.
- Few plans substantively address affordable housing issues, except for the City of Roanoke.
- All plans addressed economic development, however generally not in relation to other Focus Area issues.
- Most plans recognize the need to focus new development in existing developed areas; however, planning strategies are not consistent among localities.

- A couple of the plans attempt to coordinate the objectives of various programs to achieve broader goals or strategies.
- Most plans placed importance on supporting existing communities and neighborhoods.
- Most plans address educational issues to some level, however few plans include a focus on community health and the affect of local government services on health.

researchers conducted telephone interviews with over 1000 Roanoke Valley citizens.

A project website, www.livableroanoke.org, was established and provides a repository for project deliverables and information about future events and opportunities for involvement. A specific web page, www.ideas/livableroanoke.org dedicated to collecting ideas and promoting dialogue among interested citizens was launched on September 21st in an effort to further engage interested citizens in the planning process.

What's Next

In the summer of 2012, the Partnership began its Phase II efforts with the development of a public telephone survey regarding citizen's values and priorities regarding the region's livability. The survey was developed with the assistance of the Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research and completed between August 14th and September 16th. Virginia Tech

From October 16-18, 2012, a series of public workshops will be held at various locations in the Roanoke Valley to share the results of the surveys and provide a forum for input regarding the vision, principles, and goals for a more livable Roanoke Valley. The workshops along with input received during Phase I activities, and survey and website feedback, will inform the development of strategies to achieve the defined livability goals and principles.

Steering Committee

The Partnership is being led by a 15-member Steering Committee that includes representatives from the following organizations:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| — Botetourt County | — City of Salem | Commerce |
| — Citizen Representative | — Council of Community Services | — VA Department of Transportation |
| — Craig County | — Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission | — Virginia Western Community College |
| — Carilion | — Roanoke Valley Area MPO | — Western Virginia Water Authority |
| — Franklin County | — Roanoke Valley Chamber of | |
| — Roanoke County | | |
| — City of Roanoke | | |

<http://livableroanoke.org>

<http://ideas.livableroanoke.org>



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